



Tennessee Department of Education
Ensuring a bright future for every child

Dyslexia Resource Guide

Guidance on the “Say Dyslexia” bill

Tennessee Department of Education |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Section I: | Introduction |
| Section II: | Defining Dyslexia |
| Section III: | Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI ²) |
| Section IV: | Dyslexia screening procedures |
| Section V: | School based problem solving teams |
| Section VI: | Parent notification/communication |
| Section VII: | Instructional Approaches for Students with Dyslexia |
| Section VIII: | Dyslexia-specific Interventions |
| Section IX: | Progress Monitoring |
| Section X: | Accommodations and Assistive Technology |
| Section XI: | Professional Development Resources |
| Section XII: | Reporting by School Districts |
| Section XIII: | Independent Comprehensive Dyslexia Evaluation |
| Section XIV: | Special Education and Dyslexia |
| Section XV: | References |
| Appendix A: | Indicators of Dyslexia |
| Appendix B: | Early Indicators Checklist |

Appendix C: Differentiation Inventory

Appendix D: Dyslexia Specific Intervention Checklist

Appendix E: Dyslexia Advisory Council

Appendix F: Say Dyslexia" bill (Public Chapter 1058 of the Acts of 2016)

DRAFT

Section I: Introduction

Purpose of the Dyslexia Resource Guide

The Dyslexia Resource Guide is provided to assist districts in their implementation of the requirements established by the [“Say Dyslexia” bill \(Public Chapter 1058 of the Acts of 2016\)](#). This bill requires the department to develop guidance for identifying characteristics of dyslexia and to provide appropriate professional development resources for educators in the areas of identification and intervention methods for students with dyslexia. This bill also requires the creation of a dyslexia advisory council to advise the department on matters related to dyslexia. This council is comprised of nine appointed members with three additional ex officio members. Council membership can be found in **Appendix X**. A summary of the requirements outlined in the “Say Dyslexia” Bill are detailed below (Table 1).

Table 1: “Say Dyslexia” Bill Requirements

| Districts | TDOE | Dyslexia Advisory Council |
|--|---|---|
| Implement dyslexia screening procedures through existing RTI universal screening | Develop procedures for identifying characteristics of dyslexia | Advise the TDOE on matters relating to dyslexia |
| Convene school based problem solving team | Provide appropriate professional development resources for educators in the areas of identification and intervention methods for students with dyslexia | Meet at least quarterly |
| Notify student’s parents and provide them with | | Submit annual report to education committees |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| information and resources | | |
| Provide appropriate tiered dyslexia-specific intervention through RTI | | |
| Monitor student's progress | | |

This guide will provide districts with information related to screening procedures for dyslexia, dyslexia-specific intervention, professional development resources, and reporting requirements. The Dyslexia Resource Guide will be developed and updated with input and feedback from the dyslexia advisory council and other key stakeholder groups.

Section II: Defining Dyslexia

What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin and is characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge¹.

¹ International Dyslexia Association (2002). <http://eida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/>

Dyslexia is a term used to describe a learning profile that includes deficits in phonological awareness (i.e. ability to analyze and manipulate sounds in language). Individuals with dyslexia have difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and have poor spelling and decoding skills.

Characteristics of dyslexia

Students who read *b* for *d* or *saw* for *was* do not have a vision problem — they see things just like everyone else. To some observers, students with dyslexia may appear to be “reading backwards;” however, this is not the case.

Dyslexia is a language-based condition. Students with dyslexia struggle with the relationship between letters and sounds. Because of this, they have a hard time decoding, or sounding out, unfamiliar words, and instead often misread them based on an overreliance on their sight-word memory.

Students with dyslexia share some common characteristics, but not everyone with dyslexia is the same. Some common characteristics of dyslexia include:

- Difficulty identifying or generating rhyming words (phonological awareness)
- Difficulty with hearing and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Difficulty learning the sounds of letters (phonics)
- Difficulty remembering names and shapes of letters, or naming letters rapidly
- Misreading or omitting common short words
- Difficulty with word retrieval or naming problems
- Difficulty sounding out words
- Confuses letters that look similar to each other such as p/d/g/q and m/w/n

- Many spelling mistakes
- Excellent thinking skills
- Sophisticated listening vocabulary²

Section III: Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²)

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) is a framework designed to meet the needs of all students through increasingly intensive interventions. With RTI², all students receive core instruction; some students may need more targeted support in addition to this core instruction through Tier II interventions; a few students may need more intensive support in addition to core instruction through Tier III interventions. As outlined in Public Chapter 1058, districts must identify characteristics of dyslexia through their existing RTI² universal screening process and provide appropriate tiered dyslexia-specific interventions for students identified with these characteristics.

Tier I

Tier I instruction, also known as core instruction, provides rich learning opportunities for all students that are aligned to the Tennessee academic standards and are responsive to student strengths and needs through differentiation. The entire range of learners, including those identified with disabilities, students with the characteristics of dyslexia, students who are identified as gifted, and English Learners, are included and actively participate in Tier I instruction. Differentiation, based on multiple sources of data, is a hallmark of Tier I.

Tier II

² From *Just the Facts...Information provided by The International Dyslexia Association*

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Those students who require assistance beyond the usual time allotted for core instruction should receive additional skill-based group intervention daily in the specific area of need. Tier II intervention is explicit and systematic. Advanced students should receive reinforcement and enrichment. Intervention should include explicit instruction within the area of need for all struggling students. For example, students with the characteristics of dyslexia should receive interventions that address the specific phonological deficits identified through targeted assessments (see Section VIII: Dyslexia-Specific Interventions).

Tier III

Tier III addresses the needs of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II interventions and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and/or writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual intervention targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more intense than interventions received in Tier II. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation. Intervention should include explicit instruction within the area of need for all struggling students. For example, students with the characteristics of dyslexia should receive interventions that address the specific phonological deficits identified through targeted assessments (see Section VIII: Dyslexia-Specific Interventions).

Section IV: Dyslexia Screening Procedures

The requirement that districts must implement RTI² has resulted in districts establishing a universal screening process that best meets the needs of their students. Districts should implement a universal screening process that uses multiple sources of data to identify individual student strengths and areas of need and that provides them with accurate information for making informed decisions about skills-specific interventions, remediation,

reteaching, and enrichment for each child. All students must participate in a universal screening process to identify those who may need additional support and/or other types of instruction³.

Per current legislation, Public Chapter No.1058, this screening process must address characteristics of dyslexia for all students and shall include phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, rapid naming, and encoding (spelling) skills.

The International Association for Dyslexia provides the following definitions:

- Phonological Awareness is an individual's awareness of and access to the sound structure of his/her oral language
- Rapid Automatic Naming is the speed of naming objects, colors, digits, or letters
- Phonics Skills [Sound symbol recognition] is the understanding of the symbol (letter) to the sound(s) relationship, either individually or in combination with other letters
- Decoding is the ability to use symbol-sound associations to identify (read – pronounce) words; may be measured using real words or nonsense words

The universal screening process involves three steps:

Step One:

In grades K-8, districts should administer a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener as part of the universal screening process. Universal screeners are not assessments in the traditional sense. They are brief, informative tools used to measure academic skills in six general areas (i.e., basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, and written expression).

In August 2014, the Tennessee Department of Education utilized a statewide RFP process to identify universal screeners and progress monitoring tools that met all the criteria outlined in

³ Tennessee's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) Manual. Revised January 2017

the RTI² framework. At the time of the 2014 RFP process, the vendors below met the minimum technical score required and were identified as meeting state criteria for universal screening and progress monitoring.

The goal of the RFP process was to provide guidance for districts. ***Districts are in no way required to select a vendor or product from this list.***

| Vendors meeting state criteria and entering into cost negotiation with the state | | |
|--|---|---|
| Area Assessed | Universal Screening | Progress Monitoring |
| Reading | <u>AIMSWEB</u> NCS Pearson, Inc. <u>EasyCBM</u> The Riverside Publishing Company | <u>AIMSWEB</u> NCS Pearson, Inc. <u>EasyCBM</u> The Riverside Publishing Company |
| Math | <u>AIMSWEB</u> NCS Pearson, Inc. <u>EasyCBM</u> The Riverside Publishing Company | <u>AIMSWEB</u> NCS Pearson, Inc. <u>EasyCBM</u> The Riverside Publishing Company |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Writing | <u>AIMSWEB</u> NCS Pearson, Inc. | <u>AIMSWEB</u> NCS Pearson, Inc. |
| Vendors meeting state criteria, but not entering into cost negotiation with the state* | | |
| Area Assessed | Universal Screening | Progress Monitoring |
| Reading | <u>Dibels</u> Amplify Education, Inc., Dynamic Measurement Group, and Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc. | <u>Dibels</u> Amplify Education, Inc., Dynamic Measurement Group, and Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc. |

**The state is unable to enter into a contract with Amplify Education, Inc., Dynamic Measurement Group, and Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc. due to the state's procurement process. However, Dibels—the product submitted for review—does meet the state's technical score requirement and is identified as a product that meets state criteria for universal screening and progress monitoring. As with all vendors, districts may reach out to these vendors directly for provision of a universal screener and/or progress monitoring tool.*

In grades 9-12, schools should collect multiple sources of data that can be incorporated into an **early warning system (EWS)**. The **EWS** may include data from **universal screeners**, achievement tests (from both high school and grades K-8), end of course (EOC) exams, student records (e.g., grades, behavioral incidents, attendance, retention, past RTI² interventions), the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), and the ACT/SAT exam or other nationally normed assessments. (A template can be found on the TDOE RTI² webpage under “Instructional Resources”). Districts will establish criteria for identifying students who are at risk using this EWS by determining appropriate thresholds for each indicator (e.g., missing ten percent of instructional days may be a flag for attendance) and weighting each indicator appropriately based on local context.

Step Two

In grades K through 12, school teams should consider the results of the skills-based universal screener or EWS compared to other classroom-based assessments. These may include but are not limited to: standards-based assessments, grades, formative assessments, summative assessments, classroom performance, teacher observations, etc. This information should be used to corroborate performance on the skills-based universal screener.

This additional information should also include sources that measure early risk factors or indicators of dyslexia. See **Appendix X** for an example checklist.

Step Three

In grades K through 12, students identified as “at risk” based on multiple sources of data should be administered survey level and/or diagnostic assessments to determine student intervention needs. As required by the “Say Dyslexia” bill (Public Chapter 1058 of the Acts of 2016), these survey level assessments for reading must explicitly measure characteristics of dyslexia to include: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, rapid naming, and encoding skills.

Survey level assessments may include program placement tests or additional assessments that further drill down to deficits that may be impacting the student’s response to appropriate intervention or help identify more appropriate interventions. Survey level assessments that measure characteristics of dyslexia can be classified into two levels:

Level One Dyslexia Screening

The Level one dyslexia screening includes brief assessments to identify foundational skill deficits in need of intervention. Example assessments for use in the level one dyslexia screening are included in the chart below:

| Required Areas | Example Level One Survey Level Assessments |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Phonological and Phonemic Awareness | <p>DIBELS: First Sound Fluency (FSF) (off grade level)</p> <p>DIBELS: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) (off grade level)</p> <p>AIMSweb: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) (off grade level)</p> <p>easyCBM: Phoneme Segmenting (off grade level)</p> <p>Phonological Awareness Skills Screener (PASS)</p> <p>Curriculum based skills checks</p> |
| Sound-symbol recognition | <p>DIBELS: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (off grade level)</p> <p>AIMSweb: Letter Sound Fluency (LSF) (off grade level)</p> <p>easyCBM: Letter Sounds (LS) (off grade level)</p> |
| Alphabetic knowledge | <p>DIBELS: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (off grade level)</p> <p>AIMSweb: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (off grade level)</p> <p>easyCBM: Letter Names (LN) (off grade level)</p> |
| Decoding skills | <p>DIBELS: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (off grade level)</p> <p>DIBELS: Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) (off grade level, with running records of errors/accuracy)</p> |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| | AIMSweb: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (off grade level) AIMSweb: Reading Curriculum Based Measure (RCBM) (off grade level, with running records of errors/accuracy) easyCBM: Passage Reading Fluency (PRF) (off grade level, with running records of errors) |
| Encoding skills | AIMSweb: Spelling (off grade level, with running records of errors/accuracy) |

Level Two Dyslexia Screening

The Level Two dyslexia screening is a more detailed process for identifying strengths and weaknesses associated with the characteristics of dyslexia in order to inform intervention and may be conducted for students identified through the universal screening as falling at or below the 10th national percentile, students who did not make sufficient progress when provided with Tier II interventions, or if the team is unsure of the exact skill deficit. Example assessments for use in the level two dyslexia screening are included in the chart below:

| Required Areas | Example Level Two Survey Level Assessments |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Phonological and Phonemic Awareness | Comprehensive Tests of Phonological Processing-2nd Edition (CTOPP-2) Phonological Awareness Test-2 nd Edition (PAT-2) |
| Sound-symbol recognition | Phonological Awareness Test-2 nd Edition (PAT-2) Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST) |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| | Curriculum based skills check (Letter sounds) |
| Alphabetic knowledge | Phonological Awareness Test-2 nd Edition (PAT-2) Curriculum based skills check (Letter names) |
| Decoding skills | Phonics and Word Reading Survey (PWRS) Phonological Awareness Test-2 nd Edition (PAT-2) |
| Encoding skills | Developmental Spelling Inventory (pattern analysis) Words Their Way Word Journeys Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST) |
| Rapid Naming | Arkansas Rapid Naming Screener: http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Learning_Services/Dyslexia/Arkansas_Rapid_Naming_Screener.pdf Rapid Automatized Naming and Rapid Alternating Stimulus Tests (RAN/RAS) Comprehensive Tests of Phonological Processing-2nd Edition (CTOPP-2) |

Section V: School Based Problem Solving Teams

As part of the existing data based decision making process within the RTI² framework, school based teams shall meet to review and analyze data obtained through the universal screening process, including that found through survey level assessments. Using multiple sources of

data, the team will discuss, plan, and determine appropriate evidenced-based tiered instruction and interventions for students with skill deficits including deficits associated with the characteristics of dyslexia. Teams may suggest ways to meet student needs such as classroom accommodations and usage of assistive technology.

Teams may refer students for additional considerations when appropriate such as 504 plan or special education evaluation if additional accommodations or specialized instruction beyond tiered interventions are required to meet the student's needs.

Section VI: Parent Notification/ Communication

After a school based team has reviewed multiple sources of data in the screening process and identified skill deficits in need of intervention, parents shall receive notification of the student's performance and need for intervention. The notification should include specific areas of deficits associated with the characteristics of dyslexia. For example, if a student demonstrates weaknesses in phonological awareness inconsistent with developmental expectations and requires interventions, the parent notification should identify the area of weakness targeted in intervention (i.e., phonological awareness) and the intensity level of the intervention (e.g., Tier II, 30 minutes per day in a small group setting in addition to core instruction). On-going communication, at least every 4.5 weeks, should inform the parent(s) of the student's progress in skill development through tiered interventions, any changes in the intervention, and any additional concerns identified. A sample parent notification letter is included in [Appendix X](#).

Section VII: Instructional Approaches for Students with Dyslexia

While interventions in addition to core instruction may be required for some children, access to high quality core classroom instruction is key. Teachers need to know how to teach phonological awareness and other phonics skills, as well as the methods that develop and capitalize on these skills (ILA, 2016). In addition to foundational skills, educators embrace strong curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that embrace impactful literacy experiences that continue to support progress. This section will highlight methods that can be utilized to ensure effective instruction is provided for students that display characteristics of dyslexia.

Classroom Context

Effective instruction occurs within classroom cultures that allow students and their teacher to demonstrate a joy for learning through positive relationships. These classrooms are responsive to student unique interests, experiences, and approaches to learning. In positive classroom cultures, students are encouraged to learn from mistakes and the teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success. Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom. For students with dyslexia this creates a safe learning environment where their voices are heard and valued and they can communicate ownership over their learning needs.

Effective classrooms utilize instructional time wisely to engage students in meeting the demands of the Tennessee Academic Standards. Students are actively engaged in opportunities to read and listen to text that is appropriately complex. They engage in learning opportunities within core instruction that include whole group and differentiated small group instruction as well as collaborative learning opportunities. All students, including those that display characteristics of dyslexia, are provided access to high quality core instruction. In the early grades, this should be approximately 120 minutes of uninterrupted instruction specifically in literacy.

Reading Foundational Skills

Explicit instruction in foundational skills should be provided for all students, including those that display characteristics of dyslexia. Explicit phonics instruction immerses students in instruction focused on areas of alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, and phonics.

| Alphabetic Knowledge | Phonological Awareness | Phonics |
|---|---|---|
| The ability to name, distinguish shapes, write, and identify the sounds of the alphabet | An individual's awareness of and access to the sound structure of his/her oral language | The understanding of the symbol (letter) to the sound(s) relationship, either |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | individually or in combination with other letters ⁴ |
|--|--|--|

During core instruction in the early years, phonological awareness and phonics instruction should be both explicit and systematic. As students progress through the grades, purposeful and intentionally planned supports are provided that are age and developmentally appropriate. Students are afforded opportunities to practice their newly acquired foundational skills within authentic reading and writing activities that encourage knowledge building.

Reading/Listening Comprehension

While explicit instruction in foundational skills is necessary for students with dyslexia, this instruction alone is insufficient for achieving reading proficiency. Both skills based competencies (letter knowledge and decoding/phonological skills, concepts about print, high-frequency words, and oral reading fluency) and knowledge based competencies (vocabulary and concept development, reading comprehension, generating summaries) need to be taught in balance in order for students to progress in their reading development (Paris, 2005). Students need opportunities to apply both skills based competencies and knowledge based competencies in authentic reading contexts. Thus instruction should include the use of high quality and content rich texts for: monitoring and predicting, vocabulary enrichment, integration of reading, writing and spelling, and discussions that support reading comprehension (Vellutino, 1991; Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling, & Scanlon, 2004).

Differentiation

Effective instruction engages students in the demands and expectations of the Tennessee Academic Standards. Teachers should hold high and demanding academic expectations for all students that allow the range of learners' access to grade level standards, content, and complex text in a way that all students can demonstrate success. Shaywitz (1996) explains that dyslexia

⁴ International Association for Dyslexia

is an “encapsulated deficit often surrounded by significant strengths in reasoning, problem solving, concept formation, critical thinking, and vocabulary.” So it is important that educators draw on those strengths while providing effective differentiation to assist students in meeting the demands of the standards.

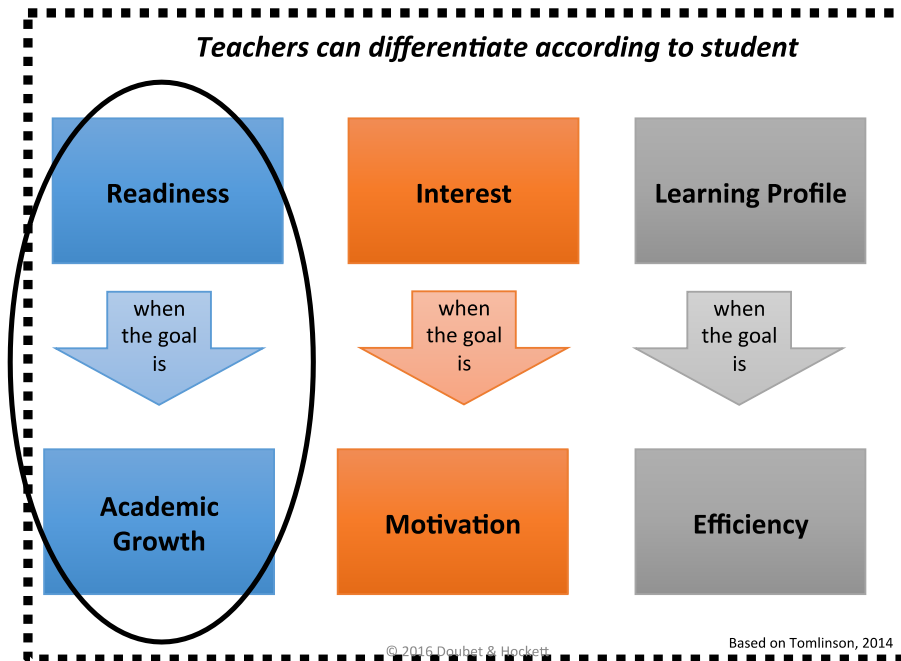
Differentiated instruction is an instructional approach that simultaneously encompasses several learning strategies and addresses individual student needs and helps the student access core instruction. Teachers should hold high expectations for all students to succeed. Differentiation takes place within the classroom environment, planning content, process, environment, and product.

Differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping makes this a successful approach to instruction.

- Differentiated instruction is a teacher’s proactive response to a learner’s individual needs, it is an instructional approach that simultaneously encompasses several learning strategies.
- Differentiated instruction helps the student access core instruction.
- Differentiated instruction is guided by principles of differentiation: environment, quality curriculum, assessment that informs teaching and learning, instruction that responds to student variance, and leading students and managing routines.

Differentiation is based on:

- Learning Profile – preferred approaches to learning
- Readiness – a student’s specific proximity to specified learning goals.
- Interests – passions, affinities, kinships that motivate learning



Successful differentiation is based on individual student strengths, need(s), and area(s) of deficit. First, determine what the student requires to access core instruction; then, effectively plan to meet their need(s). Educators should consult the Differentiation Inventory for Classroom Observation to help assess differentiation in the classroom ([see Appendix X](#)).

Students with the characteristics of dyslexia may demonstrate deficits in the following areas:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Written Expression

Determining student's needs may also include:

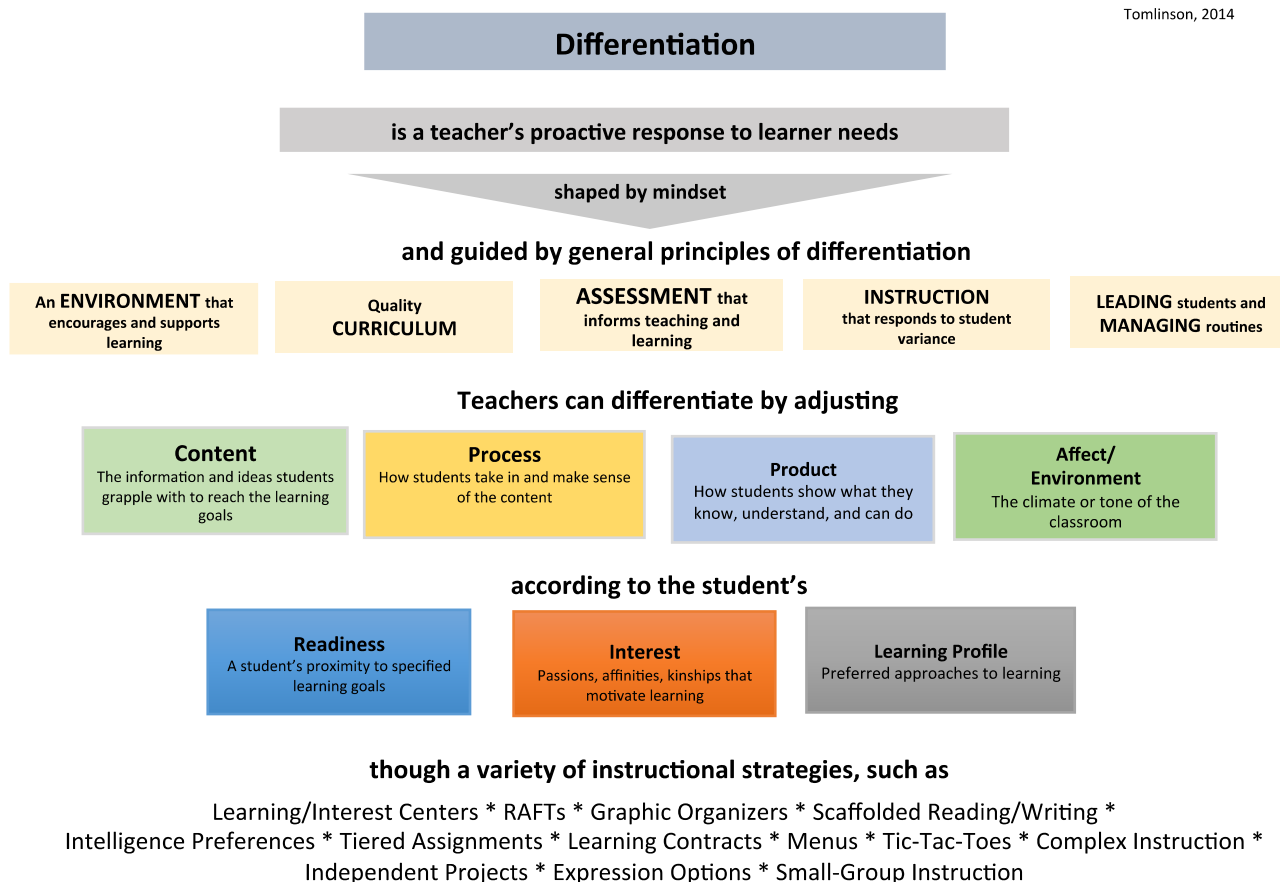
1. Utilizing diagnostic instruments to assess skill level (inquire: "what do my students know?")
2. Universal Screening and Progress monitoring data

3. Pre-tests & Post tests
4. Surveying Background Knowledge: KWL Charts
5. Student self-assessments/checklists
6. Formal and/or informal assessments
7. Being aware of student previous data/schooling background (e.g., student cumulative files, student data profiles, language levels, levels of intervention, school supports provided).
8. Determining student interest, preferred way of learning, and environmental comfort (e.g., interest in insects, small group setting, partner work, visual instruction, interactive learning boards).

Differentiated Instruction may include:

- Tiered Assignments: Scaffold to students need/ understanding
- Compacting material: Big Idea
- Collaborative Learning Centers
- Collaborative Learning Groups/ Student seating
- Flexible Grouping
- Learning Contracts/ student goal setting
- Choice of Academic Boards/ Classroom Print
- Themed Units/ Word Walls
- Sentence Frames

- Explicit Outlined Steps to Procedures



In order to provide appropriate differentiation, teachers should utilize ongoing formative assessment to understand how students think and learn. According to Howard (2009), assessment and instruction are inseparable. Effective teachers understand that assessment is embedded in learning opportunities as a natural part of the day. Effective teachers take advantage of every opportunity to gather data that can help them make more informed instructional decisions as they analyze and reflect on the information that each assessment opportunity provides. Utilizing ongoing assessment allows teachers to generate learning opportunities that are differentiated in a way that allows all students to maximize their potential and experience success.

For students that display characteristics of dyslexia, it is important that teachers utilize a wide range of assessment practices, particularly ones that allow for assessment of language based

skills such as phonological awareness. Teachers should also utilize a variety of assessment practices that allow students to demonstrate what they do know, as well as assess for what they don't know. This may include allowing alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge, such as through speaking or drawing, rather than writing. When teachers have a clear understanding of both students' strengths and needs, they can utilize scaffolds and accommodations that provide students with assistance in targeted areas.

Section VIII: Dyslexia-Specific Interventions

Once a school identifies that a student shows characteristics of dyslexia, it is important to provide the right interventions. These students need intervention that is:

- **Intensive** – given daily or very frequently for a sufficient amount of time
- **Explicit** – skills are explained, directly taught, and modeled by the teacher
- **Systematic and cumulative** – introduces concepts in a definite, logical sequence; concepts are ordered from simple to more complex
- **Structured** – has step-by-step procedures for introducing, reviewing, and practicing concepts
- **Multi-sensory** – links listening, speaking, reading, and writing together; involves movement and “hands-on” learning
- **Language-based** – addresses all levels of language, including sounds (phonemes), symbols (graphemes), meaningful word parts (morphemes), word and phrase meanings (semantics), sentences (syntax), longer passages (discourse), and the social uses of language (pragmatics)

Interventions must be aligned to individual students' needs. For students with dyslexia or for students with the characteristics of dyslexia, the intervention should address the specific phonological deficits identified through targeted assessments.

Districts should evaluate their existing intervention resources to ensure they include interventions that are multi-sensory in nature and target phonological awareness, sound-

symbol associations, syllable structure, morphology, syntax, and semantics. School districts may refer to the tools used in the department's intervention peer review process to assist in their review of existing resources and/or the selection of new intervention programs. Through the peer review process, vendors and products were evaluated independently by multiple reviewers, and after compiling all evaluation data, the department created an intervention product guide (here), which identifies each vendor and product as having "met" or "not met" the evaluated categories. This is not an exhaustive list as not all vendors submitted their intervention products for review. Also, please note that districts are not required to purchase or use interventions evaluated through this process. School districts may apply the same rubric (here) in their review of additional resources. A Dyslexia Specific Intervention Checklist is also included in Appendix X for use when choosing intervention programs.

Section IX: Progress Monitoring

Per current legislation, Public Chapter No.1058, schools must monitor the progress of students who are provided tiered interventions using tools designed to measure the effectiveness of intervention. This means that students should be progress monitored regularly with reliable and valid measures that address the targeted skills addressed through intervention to determine if the student is making expected gains or if the team needs to take a deeper look regarding reasons associated with insufficient progress (e.g., is the intervention implemented with fidelity? Does it address the root skill deficit? Are there factors such as attendance or behavior impacting the effectiveness of the intervention? Does the student need a different intervention?).

Based on the current RTI² model, progress monitoring measures should be administered at least bi-weekly but no more than once per week. In order to develop a stable reliable trend in data, research suggests that 8-10 data points are needed; however, the team should consider factors influencing the performance of the student as data is collected. For example, if the student's data appears to be inconsistent with his/her typical trend line, it would be advisable to consider the administration of the measure to make sure the environment and other conditions are not impacting performance.

When deciding on the appropriate progress monitoring tool for a student, the survey level assessment completed as part of the screening process may assist in determining which instrument is most sensitive to change. However, if the student is progress monitored off grade

level, the student should also be monitored at least monthly on a grade level instrument as well in order to help track rate of improvement and the achievement gap as compared to same grade peers. See the RTI² manual for more guidance on progress monitoring and data based decision making.

Section X: Accommodations and Assistive Technology

It is also important to consider a student's access to the general education curriculum. Access is the opportunity and ability for an individual to participate in the instruction, discussions, activities, products, and assessment that are provided to all students within a public school. Accommodations are provided to "level the playing field." They are intended to offset the effects of a disability and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

In order to fully access the curriculum, students with dyslexia may be eligible for an accommodation plan through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)[3]. Under Section 504, a student with a disability may have a plan that guarantees equal access to education and allows for certain accommodations or modifications. Unlike IDEA 2004, Section 504 has no requirement for an IEP and has fewer procedural safeguards. Some examples of accommodations for students with dyslexia may include:

- extended time on exams
- tape recording lectures
- audio books and/or screen reading technology
- use of smart pens or tablets, or spell check
- giving the student a choice between print, cursive or word processing,
- not requiring the student to read aloud in certain settings

- scribes
- oral testing options or prompting upon request
- grading writing assignments for content and not for correct spelling

School teams, in collaboration with parents and families, should consider all available information to develop a plan to address the individual needs of each student. This continuum of support may include tiered interventions through RTI², accommodations provided through Section 504, and/or special education interventions.

Section XI: Professional Development Resources

The TN Department of Education offers professional development on reading intervention (including dyslexia), at no cost to educators through the Centers for Regional Excellence (CORE)⁵. In addition, the Division of Special Populations will offer professional development opportunities to improve reading intervention practices for students with disabilities (including those with dyslexia) through web-based modules and regional support trainings. Targeted districted support is available for districts identified as needs intervention status based on the Indicators associated with poor performance on statewide assessments.

Professional learning opportunities provided by the department can be found [here](#).

Other available resources are listed in [Appendix X](#) to assist Local Educational Agencies in developing district level trainings.

Section XII: Reporting by School Districts

⁵ Reading course information can be found here: <https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/tdoe2-reading-course>

As required in Public Chapter 1058, the council will report to education committee of the senate and the education instruction and programs committee of the House of Representatives. The report shall include:

- The number of students screened and the number of students provided with dyslexia intervention services;
- Information about specific accommodations needed for students who are provided dyslexia intervention services taking the annual state mandated assessment or other state or LEA mandated assessments;
- Descriptions, from the LEAs that provided dyslexia intervention services, of the intervention services provided to students; and
- The TV AAS growth data, when available, for the students receiving dyslexia intervention services.

Section XIII: Parent-initiated Independent Comprehensive Dyslexia Evaluations

A dyslexia evaluation is not required for a school to provide interventions to address characteristics of dyslexia; however, if a parent chooses to seek an outside/ independent evaluation for dyslexia and shares the results of the evaluation obtained at private expense with the school district, the school district must consider the results of the evaluation in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Section XIV: Special Education and Dyslexia

Literacy deficits should be addressed through the least restrictive environment for the individual student within a continuum of services. The continuum considerations include general education instruction and intervention, general accommodations, 504 plans, and special education services.

If a student is not successful with interventions provided through general education (i.e. RTI²), he/she *may* be diagnosed with an educational disability (i.e. specific learning disability). The criteria for identifying a student with a specific learning disability is established by state and

federal law. In Tennessee, this includes a student's response to research-based intervention (see Appendix X). Although eligibility for special education *includes* students with dyslexia, students with dyslexia still need to meet state criteria for a specific learning disability in order to receive special education services. Special education interventions are considered the most intensive and are provided based on a student's eligibility and his/her need for specialized instruction. Parents have the right to request an evaluation to consider special education at any time, regardless of the student's participation in tiered interventions

It is not required that the school team determine a full battery of testing associated with dyslexia at the time of referral as evaluations are based on special education disability criteria⁶; however, the team should consider referral concerns and determine the most appropriate assessment plan to identify student deficits and develop a plan based on a continuum of services in the least restrictive environment.

For more information regarding characteristics of dyslexia that teams may choose to assess as part of a comprehensive evaluation refer to: <https://dyslexiaida.org/testing-and-evaluation/>.

⁶ Tennessee disability criteria for a student with a specific learning disability can be found at: http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/se_eligibility_sld_standards.pdf

References

DRAFT

Appendices

DRAFT